

# ASTRO

*The American Society  
for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology, Inc.*

July 19, 2001

The Honorable John Dingell  
United States House of Representatives  
2328 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Representative Dingell,

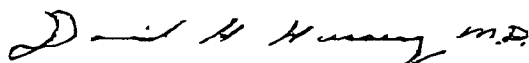
On behalf of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) we would like to thank you for your vital leadership in introducing a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights. ASTRO has more than 6,100 members, including physicians (radiation oncologists), radiation scientists (radiobiologists, radiological physicists), radiation therapy technologists and radiation oncology nurses. These specialists make up the expert medical team that uses radiation to treat patients with cancer.

As physicians and members of the larger cancer community, we are specifically pleased that your legislation provides comprehensive coverage for routine patient care costs in all high quality clinical trials as well as timely access to specialists. As the war against cancer continues it is vitally important that patients have access to emerging technologies and therapies, and the physicians who provide these services. Your legislation will help to achieve this result.

Last year, the Medicare program acted pursuant to executive memorandum to extend coverage to all trials conducted under either government funding agencies or the regulatory oversight of the Food and Drug Administration. If such a policy is appropriate for the Medicare program, it should be a guaranteed right for patients under private health plans.

Without a comprehensive coverage provision, patients will continue to be at the mercy of health plans' inconsistent approach to this issue, and the larger war against cancer will suffer. For this reason we strongly support the patients' rights provisions contained in H.R. 526 and look forward to its eventual enactment.

Sincerely,



David H. Hussey, M.D.  
Chairman, ASTRO